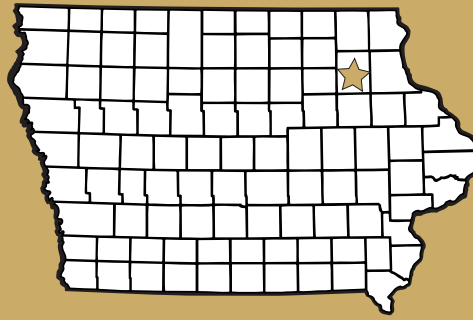


**Collin Jensen**  
West Union, Iowa  
Corn/Soybeans  
1,800 Acres



# Strip-Till Producer Profile



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Collin Jensen uses trash whippers to create strips for spring fertilizer application and planting, which reduces soil erosion, improves soil quality, lessens compaction and saves money.**

## Land/Soil Type

Collin Jensen row crops 1,800 acres in Fayette County. Some of his cropland sits on Kenyon-Clyde-Floyd soils with little slope, and typical of wet spring conditions. His other farmland lies in Downs-Fayette soils where slopes are steeper and the soils drain better.

Jensen says tiling is important in poorly drained areas. "Soil type is not a limiting factor with my program, as long as you have drainage under control," he says.

## Fertility Plan

### Fall

Jensen spreads dry chicken litter in the fall, and performs minimal subsoiling to help lift compacted areas.

### Spring

He applies 18-50 gallons (48-133 lbs.) of 32% N with Dawn® fertilizer coulters at a four-inch depth, ahead of the trash whippers. "My fertilizer openers are 3½ inches offset to the side of the seed row," he says.

## Soil Sampling

Jensen performs soil sampling every three to four years by soil type. "Most every farm I run I've farmed so long I know where all the old field lines are," he said. "I usually sample five-acre areas."

He says he has soil sampled some of his acres since the 1960s, and he has seen dramatic increases in organic matter.

## Strips

Jensen makes strips in the spring when he plants and fertilizes. Except for a little subsoiling, he leaves crop residue untouched until planting time.

In Jensen's system, it is important to plant on the contour. The stripped area can be susceptible to washing after planting, since the row sits lower than the crop residue. Water may tend to move toward the unprotected area.

Jensen plants continuous corn on steeper slopes. He says continuous corn helps reduce erosion, particularly during heavy rain events.

## Equipment

To prepare the soil for planting, Jensen uses Yetter Shark-Tooth® trash whippers. He uses a 24-row planter, and plants 20 inches apart at a 1¼-2 inch depth. "The Yetter trash whip-



Contour Farming



Newly Planted Corn



# Strip-Till

## Producer Profile

Collin Jensen



pers handle crop residue very well," he said. "All I try to do is move the trash and find a clear zone."

"I've planted like this for more than 25 years," he says. "I have tried several types of trash whippers, but I have been very successful with the Yetter I have now."

### Economic Benefits

Jensen cuts costs by performing his own fertilizing, planting and harvesting. Since he only makes a couple passes through his fields annually, Jensen has much lower fuel costs than producers who till conventionally. He says he uses approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  gallon per acre to fertilize and plant his crops.

With his program, Jensen says, "You can cut back on tractors, equipment, fuel and man hours per acre compared to conventional farming, and at the same time lose less soil. What else are you looking for?"

Jensen says his system allows him more time to scout and manage crops.

### Performance/Yields

He feels that if he can plant his crops at the same time other farmers do, he has a shot at the same yields everybody else does. "There's give and take - no system is the best every year," says Jensen.

Years of running a high residue cropping system has undoubtedly saved soil for Jensen, but it has also helped improve the quality and performance of his soils. "In my soils there is a lot of decomposed material. It looks like good stuff you would see in a compost pile," he says. "Over time,

the soil at planting depth has built more structure and doesn't crust as easily."

### Challenges

Since Jensen leaves residue on his fields until planting, one challenge he faces is waiting until soils dry before planting. "Particularly with corn, I have to wait longer to get in the field than guys who chisel," he says.

### Management Tips

#### Leave Stalks Standing

Jensen believes it is important to leave cornstalks standing. "They are the pipeline by which water gets into the soil. Corn root mass left untouched holds more soil and doesn't wash into the ditches," he says. "I like to leave stalks as tall as I can so I don't have more matting than I want on the soil."

#### Worms Are Your Friend

Earthworms are an important part of Jensen's system. They help improve soil quality by increasing the availability of nutrients, improving physical properties of the soil, moving residue deep into the soil and enhancing beneficial microorganisms. In addition, earthworm channels help remove excess rainfall and snowmelt.

### Contact Collin Jensen

Jensen is available to answer your questions about strip-till:

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